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The world has changed since I took charge of the school in June 2019. As I embark on a second term of duty, the pandemic, that seemingly ebbs and flows, continues to wreak havoc and instill uncertainty. Simultaneously we face a cascade of social, economic, and political challenges that had been forced aside and are now emerging in new, urgent ways. Now more than ever, our collective efforts—from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends—are needed to design a future that keeps each other safe, addresses and overcomes the injustice of social and economic inequality, as well as the scourge of racism. We will implement long-term change in the ways we recruit, educate, and foster future generations of architects. We are actively drawing upon our architectural and political agency to work responsively toward our common goals, in this new context of limited resources, climate change, social upheaval, and political uncertainty.

Moving forward I am committed to transparency in how decisions are made in the school and will include, henceforth, all constituents on our action-based committees. We will continue to infuse the school with new voices through a search for two new Wortham Fellows and another for a tenure-track position. We will proceed in earnest on the design for our new 20,000 square-foot addition to our existing building, The William T. Cannady Hall for Architecture, and will conclude the search for a new dean. We welcome five new faculty this year in a variety of positions and an incredible group of matriculating students who have demonstrated their eagerness to participate in our shared enterprise.

In the face of an enormous confluence of complex issues, I am extremely optimistic about the plans we have for the year ahead. I am most appreciative of the tireless and concerted effort the faculty has expended during the summer months to devise and implement innovative ways of teaching studios and classes, both in face-to-face and online modes. We are able to implement this fall semester’s plans with the stellar support of our dedicated staff who always keep us on track. We are also the beneficiaries of an incredible community of students whose talent, intellectual curiosity, and determination remind us constantly why we chose to be architectural educators.

Against all adversity our conversation will be full of optimism for the possibilities ahead. We will never lose sight of our common goal to nurture design leaders who have the transformational skills, means, and abilities to engage in their communities at the highest levels in shaping their environment for the benefit of society at large.

Join us as we continue to reshape our world.

— John J. Casbarian, Interim Dean, Harry K. and Albert K. Smith Professor of Architecture, and Director of External Programs
Houston is a mystery even to Houstonians. You gotta be here for a while before H-Town reveals itself to you. By population the city is America’s fourth-largest, but by area it’s the biggest: 669 square miles, over half the size of Rhode Island. Welcome to the sprawl.

At first, Houston appears banal—but look closer and things veer strange. There are citizens from around the world who are experts in many fields; buildings of all shapes, sizes, materials, and textures; businesses of every variety; signs, advertisements, and text in a spread of languages; and a fecund array of plants conspiring to take it all back. Each overgrown lot is someone’s rendition of the American dream, each courtyard house its own world, all laid up one after the other for miles.

Nothing here is normal at all, really. Houston is a swamp of potential, in the best way. To Texanize a Dutch saying: God made Texas, but Texans made Houston. The city has built itself up on the muddy banks of the bayous and this effort of self-realization—and marketing!—remains a psychic cornerstone of the Bayou City’s can-do attitude. The city is not afraid to demolish what is deemed past its expiration date, and, historically, it has made big plans to build what it wants. Houston is America’s id, a place where our material needs are met in a deregulated landscape of consumption.

In moving forward, we might apply this same desirous, survivalist attitude to the ongoing, intersecting crises of our time. We could embrace the city’s collective impulses—big dreams, big schemes, big hair—and apply them to contemporary problems. In doing so, we’d become not less Houstonian, but more.

We’ll see. Space City is a work in progress; it vibrates with adolescent energy. The streets flood, but at least there’s jasmine plants and good food. Everything you could want is here—unless you want hills! To renovate one final aphorism in the service of the Magnolia City’s eclectic splendor: “If a person is tired of Houston, they are tired of life.”

Portions of this text appeared previously in Cite and Texas Architect.
The one-year Rice Preceptorship Program was formally established in 1968 to provide a practicum between the fourth and fifth years of the Bachelor of Architecture curriculum. Participating offices are selected by the school from among the leading firms in the U.S. and abroad and appointed by the university for two-year terms. Current firms include Adjaye Associates in New York; Kieran Timberlake in Philadelphia; Payette in Boston; Olson Kundig in Seattle; Johnston Marklee in Los Angeles; Diller, Scofidio + Renfro in New York; Thomas Phifer & Partners in New York; and Renzo Piano Building Workshop in Paris, among others.

Preceptees intern for a minimum nine-month period, participate in a variety of roles that provide a better understanding of the scope of professional practice, and are paid normal wages. Seniors apply by portfolio first to the Fifth Year Program, which is comprised of Preceptorship followed by a final fifth year of academic study. Two analytical reports per semester are required of preceptees in addition to submission, upon their return, of a portfolio of work produced.
Rice Architecture is an intensive, top-ranked graduate program that foregrounds design, discourse, and practice. We equip future architects with critical expertise and optimistic sensibilities that position them to be leaders in a rapidly changing world. The exchange of knowledge and sharing of intellectual culture between faculty, students, and visitors at Rice Architecture (in studios, seminars, lectures, reviews) is essential to the continuous development of collective conversations, and to the disciplinary debates that reverberate within the school and expand beyond to influence our collective futures.

Rice Architecture’s primary graduate program is the Master of Architecture (M.Arch.), a nationally accredited professional degree with two possible tracks of study. The Option 1, seven-semester track is for applicants with limited background in architecture. The Option 2, five-semester track is for those applicants who hold a four-year undergraduate degree in architecture from national and international schools that have been approved for advanced standing. The Option 1 and Option 2 tracks merge in the third semester, generating a dynamic intellectual and cultural context for design.

The core courses of the program expose all students to fundamental disciplinary issues within architecture while establishing a shared set of historical, contemporary, or emerging references, questions, and speculations. The required core sequence includes design studio and courses in history and theory, technology, and professional practice. These four areas deliberately overlap and intersect in a productive feedback loop—demanding that students synthetically engage the world of architecture and all that it implies.

Following the core studios, advanced options take up specialized topics (urban, environmental, political, material) that range in scale and technique. These research-driven design studios situate pressing contemporary questions, asking students to decisively synthesize their expertise through plausible, provocative architectural proposals. One semester of advanced studios includes Totalization, a unique format that inserts nationally-recognized architecture and engineering consultants into the studios, positing that architectural innovation emerges from collaboration and adept anticipation of technical contingencies. In the final semester, M.Arch. students develop an independent thesis project. Thesis enables each student to situate their architectural ambitions in relation to the field, defining and claiming a position about architecture in the world. (See page 21.)

Rice Architecture’s second graduate program, known as Present Future, leads to the Master of Science in Architecture degree. Present Future is a three-semester, post-graduate, special-topic research project directed by a Rice Architecture faculty member. This non-professional degree program gathers a diverse group of students to work precisely and collectively on focused, disciplinary research that culminates in an exhibition, book, or symposium. Topics are selected by the faculty director for their current relevance to architectural practice. (See page 18.)

In both the M.Arch. and M.A. programs, a broad selection of elective courses within the architecture school and across the university provide extended contexts for disciplinary debate, architectural activism, material experimentation, and unanticipated innovations.
Totalization recognizes that architecture is generalist, collaborative, and unpredictable, and that architectural innovation only happens when that totality is nimble enough to accommodate contingencies. Totalization sees the architect as the negotiator at the center of a diverse team of collaborators. Projects are understood to be contingent and evolving—a totaling up that is never fixed or finite.

The Totalization studio semester coordinates all of the advanced fall studios in order to emphasize design’s intrinsic relationship to other fields, ranging from finance to fabrication. Nationally recognized consultants (Robert Heintges, Nat Oppenheimer, Mark Malekshahi, among others) are embedded in the studios, advising students on façades, structure, MEP, and other factors.

Each studio focuses in-depth upon a single, fundamental research topic engaging materials, techniques, technologies, elements, or markets.

For example, what is the structural and symbolic role of the roof today? Exposure to additional critical realms takes place in required seminars and lectures attended by all Totalization studios and addresses further considerations, such as accessibility, fire safety, environmental controls, construction document delivery, and development financing.

Depth and breadth: Totalization’s unique organization, which coordinates and synthesizes its multiple studios and multiple consultants, means that the specific research topic in question is developed within architecture’s broader scope.
Present Future is an intensive, three-semester research-based program of advanced architectural studies culminating in a Master of Science in Architecture degree.

Present Future explores the prospects of urban and architectural design from the perspective of our current environmental conditions. The transformation of the atmosphere’s chemical composition, and its increasing effects on agriculture production, sea level rise, and the mass extinction of species, suggests a future that bears little resemblance to the one that we live in today. While a picture of the future is beginning to emerge—in the white papers of scientists, in the speeches of activists or politicians, and in the fictional worlds in which books, films and television place us—the design specifications for this future have yet to be written. An opportunity exists to fully imagine the urban conditions that would not only respond to climate change, but would exploit the opportunity to produce a culture of collective engagement which many cities routinely deny.

While the problems we face are global in scope, the solutions best arise from local circumstances, the constituencies they affect and the evolving political and cultural institutions that are fashioned in response. For each project, Present Future brings together a diverse group of architects, landscape architects, engineers, urban researchers and city officials whose combined expertise is required to meet the complexities of our problems. Through a studio setting the group comes together around a specific site and work through a series of alternative architectural and urban scenarios. These scenarios are not simply routine technical upgrades nor do they only solve the limited problem of excessive energy consumption and carbon emissions. Rather, they explore an overhaul of the economic, political and cultural practices that are at the root of each situation. In a search for local solutions, these scenarios will outline a viable urban culture that is calibrated to the environmental limitations of the neighborhood, the city, the region and the planet.

The specific environmental concerns that each matriculating class examines will be framed in a three-semester sequence, beginning with a three-credit seminar in the first semester, a twelve-credit collective design studio in the second, culminating in a book, exhibition, or symposium that will be produced in the final semester. In addition to free electives, the curriculum includes additional required courses on issues related to the semester’s work. This is a cross-disciplinary course of study focused on design and open to all interested students with advanced degrees, not only those with advanced degrees in architecture. The minimum requirement is a B.A. or B.S., or its equivalent.
Graduate thesis is an opportunity for students to reflect on their education, reconsider their designs, figure out what really interests them in architecture, and begin to explore that interest before they step out of the academy to engage and make decisions in the world.

All Master of Architecture students are required to develop a thesis proposal during their penultimate semester in a one-credit-hour course that is taken alongside the final course in the history and theory sequence, Contemporary Practices. These courses, which consider current and emerging issues in and approaches to architecture and urbanism, encourage students to understand the implications of their interests for architecture and the environment and are designed to assist students to articulate where and to what extent those interests are relevant, preferably pressing, and why. They provide a setting in which students can independently formulate and develop a proposal for a semester of design work that will adequately articulate, situate, and investigate the relevance and limitations of their attitude and approach to architectural and urban design.

Students admitted to thesis further develop and pursue their proposals under the direction of a faculty advisor in a semester of intense creative research. Thesis concludes in a final public review of this work with distinguished guests that engages the entire school. Successful theses and the discussion they foster stimulate future activity at Rice Architecture and beyond.
Made possible by a generous lead gift and matched by other donors, an endowment for Rice Architecture Course Travel was created to honor Harry K. and Albert K. Smith Professor John J. Casbarian, who founded the Paris Program and has long championed the importance of travel in the education of architects. Thanks to the Casbarian Fund the school sends students to locations across the globe with their design studios. Each spring over 100 students travel to cities around the globe, including places like Barcelona, Paris, Berlin, Lisbon, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Marfa.

The junior studio traveled to Spain’s capital city of Madrid and two of its nearby cities: Córdoba and Segovia. The trip exposed students to a variety of ancient, medieval, and contemporary works of architecture, from Madrid’s Muslim foundations to Segovia’s Roman infrastructures, from Córdoba’s magnificent Mosque to the city’s recently completed Center for Contemporary Art. The students also met and interacted with key figures of Spanish Architecture such as Luis Fernández Galiano and Juan Herreros. Other highlights included visits to works of architecture by Rafael Moneo, Fernando Higueras, Juan Herreros, Paredes Pedrosa, Jean Nouvel, Nieto Sobejano, among others, as well as a detailed tour of the Prado Museum, Madrid CaixaForum, and the Reina Sofía National Museum of Art. Other visits included guided tours of IE School of Architecture & Design in Segovia, and of ETSAM, Madrid’s renowned and Spain’s premier school of architecture.

As the world becomes more connected, architects must address the pressing architectural and urban demands that result; these intense course trips reflect Rice Architecture’s commitment across a global public sphere.
With a generous lead gift from Professor Emeritus William T. Cannady, Rice Architecture is planning an extension to M.D. Anderson Hall, to be named The William T. Cannady Hall for Architecture. The 20,000 square-foot building will accommodate spaces for collaborative research, flexible teaching, exhibitions, public gatherings, as well as an expanded fabrication lab.

Swiss architectural firm Karakum Kuo has been retained to design this building in association with Kendall Heaton in Houston. Established in 2010 by Jeannette Kuo and Unal Karamuk, the award-winning firm brings diverse building experiences to the design process. Known for creatively working within constraints, and with extensive backgrounds in the design of academic buildings and in architectural education, they are especially well situated to consider the spatial concepts and logistical needs of Rice Architecture.

A design feasibility study has already been completed and full architectural services will commence in September 2020. Building completion is expected by 2023.

For more information, contact Emily Stein, director of development, at ems12@rice.edu or (713) 348-3424.
The great patron of the arts and King of France, François I, once said that Paris is not a city, it’s a world, and in this special world we established our foreign study program in 2002. Like no other city, Paris’ very foundations are there to see and touch, from the vestiges of its earliest Roman encampment, to the medieval city, through the nineteenth century radical urban fabric created by Baron Haussmann and now the innovations of a 21st century urban center, this world provides one of the greatest opportunities to learn from the past, present, and future.

As the only satellite campus of Rice University, Rice Architecture Paris provides a semester-long opportunity to explore advanced topics in architecture. Located in the 12ème arrondissement, near La Bastille, the program operates in both the fall and spring semesters. Course offerings include a design studio; seminars in history/theory, technology, and representation; as well as French language and culture classes. Organized study trips to other cities in France and Europe are a major component of the curriculum.

Taught by faculty drawn from Rice and the leading architecture and art history programs in Europe, Rice Architecture Paris is a nimble think-tank, taking advantage of the extraordinary offerings that Paris provides, as well as the city’s role as a cultural nexus for the world.

Rice Architecture Paris is also open, on a very limited basis, to qualified students and graduates from other architecture programs who have taken at least seven semesters of undergraduate studios or four graduate studios.
For more than twenty years, Rice Architecture has engaged the world and our community by challenging students to contribute directly to the built environment. Construct students design and build projects that produce lasting effects, working with local community groups to create enduring resources for underserved neighborhoods while building knowledge through research and experience.

Working at various scales and in diverse situations, students engage all facets of the creative process—from conception through construction. Expanding their knowledge in the pursuit of novel solutions to real-world challenges, students work together to test concepts against the practical realities of budget and schedule, explore innovative means of analysis and fabrication, and translate forward-thinking designs into built works.
Rice Design Alliance (RDA) is the public programs and outreach arm of Rice Architecture. We are based within and work outwards from the school as an advocacy group that believes that multidisciplinary, research-based design can improve our cities and the way we live in them.

RDA was established within Rice Architecture in 1972 by the school’s first dean, David Crane, together with alumni and other civic-minded community members who believed that quality design thinking should be available to all in our community and that Houston’s citizens—experts and non-experts alike—should feel empowered to act and transform our city through design.

Throughout the academic year, RDA works closely with students and faculty, as well as with local, national, and international civic leaders and organizations, to curate a variety of programs that examine how people and cities interact through the lens of design. Our programs include lectures, civic forums, design competitions, K-12 educational outreach, architecture tours, and studio visits to some of the key architecture, design, and artist studios in town—all of which aim to connect the core research and experimental values of Rice Architecture with the larger community of architectural and design practitioners. Through its Spotlight Award, each year RDA supports and recognizes the work of exceptionally gifted architects from around the world in the early stages of their professional career and brings them to Houston to lecture and engage with students. RDA also awards the Houston Design Research Grant, an annual grant to students and faculty from across the country that promotes research around urban topics of urgency to Houston, and of national and international relevance.

For over thirty-five years, RDA has published Cite magazine—an annual print publication with an accompanying digital platform, Cite Digital—with the belief that strong architecture and design writing can elevate conversations about our built environment. The articles, interviews, architecture reviews, and features of Cite and Cite Digital focus on the most pressing issues for Houston and engage in wider design conversations. Cite relies on critical contributions from a diverse group of authors, including students, faculty, and practitioners from our Houston community and beyond.

As for all of us, things will be slightly different for RDA this year as we transition our programs, lectures, and publications to be mostly online. Behold the year of experimentation! We still like to think that our initiatives, whether offered in person or digitally, will continue to expand the boundaries of design, pose provocative questions, and critically engage our local, national, and international audiences by communicating the importance of design in our everyday lives. Overall, our projects all take the complex urban conditions of Houston as a starting point from which we question our relationships with our cities. Our work advances an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach that brings practitioners, researchers, interested citizens, industry leaders, and public officials together to envision the most inspiring—and sometimes unconventional—solutions to urban problems.

Learn more about Rice Design Alliance and the ways in which you can get involved with our programs and publications at www.ricedesignalliance.org.
PLAT Journal
Tête-à-Tête Podcast

Founded in 2009, PLAT is an independent architecture journal published by the students of Rice Architecture. Through a combination of open submissions and commissioned pieces, the editors seek out contributions from various disciplines to generate a vibrant conversation. PLAT offers a place to share work of all varieties and mixes writing from established professionals and emerging voices. Each new editorial team develops a unique and timely theme to explore in their issue. While the .0 issues are presented in a standard print format, the .5 responses to the previous .0 publication take various forms. PLAT prizes agility and remains committed to advancing a provocative set of ideas that are always in flux.

Over the summer months, PLAT published the online issue 8.5 as a responsive issue to the issue 8.0 Simplicity, featuring a range of conversations and articles. To kick off the fall semester, PLAT, in partnership with the podcast series Tête-à-Tête, is hosting a digital roundtable discussion with some of the issue’s contributors in October 2020.

Follow the work online at platjournal.com and on Instagram @platjournal.

Tête-à-Tête is a student-produced podcast series that strives to highlight architectural discourse both within Rice Architecture and the global architecture community. Each episode is intended to keep architecture enthusiasts, professionals, academics, and students informed of relevant issues. The easily accessible digital platform allows conversations to be distilled and circulated quickly. Defined as a private conversation between two people, Tête-à-Tête is an effort to record cutting-edge knowledge about architecture and reveal it to a wide audience.

The podcast team works to foster and curate exciting conversations with a range of featured guests including lecturers, faculty members, alumni, students and professionals. Past guests have included, Dana Cuff, Peggy Deamer, Tom Emerson, Frida Escobedo, Reto Geiser, Cade Manning Hayes, Scott Key, Jeannette Kuo, Maria Lisogorskaya, Alan Maskin, Jesús Edmundro Robles Jr., Rob Rogers, Danny Samuels, Jack Self, Christof Spieler, Jesús Vassallo, and Mark Wamble.

Tête-à-Tête is Anna Brancaccio, Anna Cook, Lindsey Chambers, Siobhan Finlay, Jessica LaBarbera, Edward Simpson, and Michelle Schneider with assistance from Staff Advisor and Communications Specialist Shawna Forney.

All episodes are available on the Rice Architecture website, Apple Podcasts, Google Play Music, Spotify, Stitcher, and SoundCloud.
Rice Architecture Mentorship is a subset of Society that empowers students at Rice Architecture to translate their studies into possible future trajectories in architecture as well as allied practices.

To accomplish this vision, Mentorship connects Rice Architecture alumni and friends with the current student body, providing students with opportunities to build professional relationships and the resources to learn about a broad range of career options.

The Mentorship coordinating team organizes these opportunities through five main avenues: a speed mentorship event; a curated lecture series; external programs including interviews, externships, recess, and a career fair; professionalism and technology workshops; and field trips to cultural, historical, and commercial sites.

Mentorship coordinates its programming with Jacki Schaefer, Rice Architecture’s Career and Alumni Specialist.

Rice Architecture Society aims to increase student discourse and connect the school to the broader university. As a group of committed students, Society focuses on the peripheral aspects of an architectural education that shape the culture of the school.

Society’s main social and educational events include weekly open studios: late-night studio gatherings for the exchange of snacks and ideas; mini-charrettes: weekend-long design competitions; Architectronica (fall) and ArchiArts (spring): university-wide parties; and open houses: post-final review events for the display of semester work.

In addition to these events, Society creates the student directory, curates student exhibitions, and organizes conversations with the dean. Its members act as the voice of the student body and keep students informed about events and opportunities at Rice Architecture.

Rice Architecture Mentorship B.Arch. student Elina Chen Mentorship Director

Rice Architecture Society B.Arch. student Gabriella Feuillet Society President
Rice Architecture teaches architects to be leaders in the conversations and practices that shape our worlds. We recognize students for outstanding academic achievements that range from inspiring travel proposals to stellar GPAs and to projects that fuel extraordinary discussions across our review week. We also recognize our generous alumni and friends who have given these awards to the school, offering our students the time and resources to see the worlds that will shape them, and that they, in turn, will shape.

The Margaret Everson-Fossi Traveling Fellowship
Established in memory of Rice Architecture student Margaret Everson-Fossi, this award goes to fifth year or graduate students on the basis of the best design projects for the options studios during this academic year.

The William Ward Watkin Traveling Fellowship
This award for foreign travel honors the memory of the first chairman of the Department of Architecture.

The Rosemary Watkin Barrick Traveling Fellowship
This fellowship is awarded to talented students in architecture for travel while still enrolled at Rice, based on proposals evaluated by the faculty.

The Morris R. Pitman Award in Architecture
Awarded to returning architecture graduate students showing outstanding potential to the profession, earmarked for travel, and awarded based on merit and strength of a proposal.

The H. Russell Pitman Graduate Fellowship in Architecture
This award provides traveling fellowship assistance to graduate students in architecture and is awarded based on merit and strength of proposal.

The Mary Ellen Hale Lovett Traveling Fellowship
Based upon submitted travel proposals and academic performance, these fellowships are awarded each year to talented graduate and undergraduate students in architecture for travel while still enrolled at Rice.

The John Crowder Traveling Fellowship
Established in memory of John Crowder, a 1963 alumnus of Rice Architecture, this award is to be used for broadening an individual’s experience through travel and is awarded to a returning student or students in the graduate program, based on merit and strength of proposal.

The John T. Mitchell Traveling Fellowship
Established in memory of John T. Mitchell, Jr., a 1972 alumnus of Rice Architecture. Awarded to returning graduate students for independent study or travel concerning the general topic of urbanism, based on merit and strength of proposal.